

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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## YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HOBSON'S CHOICE," &c.

### CHAPTER XXXIV. POOR RACHEL.

As I re-entered the office down-stairs, Vickery, without lifting his eyes from the papers before him, held up his hand as though warning me not to approach him. There was a frown upon his forehead due possibly to the intentness of his study; but I ascribed it to his disapproval of my admission to the upper chambers of the house and my interview with Miss Monck.

"Don't speak, don't interrupt me," he said presently. "I'm busy with these accounts for the Master's Office. Two and five and ten and four"—he continued to add up a long column of figures in a gasping sort of manner.

When at last he paused to take a pinch of snuff, I felt that I might fairly address him.

"I've had the pleasure of seeing Miss Monck," I said.

"Precisely."

"For the first time."

"It may be the only one. However, you've seen a most admirable and exemplary young lady, Mr. Nightingale." He seemed impelled unconsciously, or in spite of himself, to render this homage to Rachel.

"She spoke of you in the highest terms, Mr. Vickery." He looked pleased, though he took to scowling immediately afterwards.

"She's very kind—she's too kind. But we need say nothing more about that, Mr. Nightingale. If you've finished that brief copy you've been engaged upon so long, I shall be happy to find you further occupation. There's plenty to do in this office, I

can assure you, plenty to do; that is, supposing"—he hesitated.

"Supposing that I remain here? Of course, I remain here."

"Precisely. It was not by my advice the option was given you; but as it has been given you, and you've decided——"

"Quite decided."

"We need say no more about it then. Only it may be well for you to bear in mind that all that was said to you was strictly confidential. You will please to regard it in that light, Mr. Nightingale."

"Of course."

"You will show that you can keep a secret. No man can hope to be a lawyer who can't keep a secret. And you will not attempt to see Miss Monck again. Nor to go up-stairs unless you are specially requested so to do."

"For what do you take me, Mr. Vickery?"

I asked rather warmly. "Can you suppose me capable of conduct so disgraceful? I shall see Miss Monck only when she expresses a wish to see me."

"Precisely. That is what I intended to convey. I meant no offence, Mr. Nightingale."

"Meantime I shall strive hard to write as well as Miss Monck does; without any hope of succeeding, however."

He said nothing, but by a petulant movement of his head, I judged him to be ill-pleased that I had been informed as to Rachel's labours as a copying clerk. We had no further conversation on the subject. It seemed to me that he was like a miser who had been compelled to disburse. Certain of the secrets and mysteries he hoarded had been torn from him and disclosed, in spite of all his efforts to the contrary. He was angry and indignant that I now shared, although in a small degree,

his knowledge of matters he had hoped to keep concealed. In fact he was jealous and distrustful of me.

I certainly bore the old man no ill-will, however. Rachel Monck's high praise of him was still fresh in my memory. His advice had been adverse to my interests, and I could not but see that in so recklessly securing the premium paid upon my being articleed, he was open to the charge of disingenuous dealing. Yet she had commended warmly his kindness and fidelity. On that score he deserved to be forgiven much more than his sins against me, if, indeed, they could properly be rated as sins.

I longed to see Tony; to inform him of all that had happened. But, greatly to my disappointment, he was for some days absent from our rendezvous in Rupert-street, nor could I find him at his chambers. I had become now so accustomed to intimate communication with him, that I was really grieved at his non-appearance.

I had something to occupy my thoughts, however. I was continually reflecting upon, and rehearsing my interview with Rachel. I wished over and over again that I had more fully availed myself of the opportunity, and expressed with greater force and eloquence my deep sympathy with her, my sorrow for her father's unfortunate condition, my desire to assist and comfort her to the utmost of my power. It was distressing to me to think of her severe trials and troubles; so young and fair as she was, shut up in that gloomy house in close attendance upon a sick man, an almost helpless invalid as it seemed, and her only relief from anxiety and watching, the drudgery of copying the dreariest of law papers.

And then it was plain that poverty was beginning to vex and wound her. She had frankly confessed as much. My premium had been pounced upon and expended. She had protested against this proceeding, but had been overruled by Vickery; perhaps also by necessity. How was this to end? To think of her suffering from want, absolute want! And it might come to that.

What could I do to help her? I meditated sending her anonymously all the money I possessed. Would she suspect, discover me? It might be so; and then I felt that she would have just cause to be indignant at my conduct, to deem herself insulted, injured. Moreover, I found, when I came to examine my resources, that I had very little money to send.

Once I thought of writing to my uncle and applying for a loan of considerable amount with a view to its transmission to Rachel. But I knew that he would require, that he would be entitled to, explanations. Could I offer any? Was I at liberty to reveal all or anything that she had avowed to me? It was true that she had not pledged me to secrecy, but I was not the less bound to respect her confidence. I had promised as much to Vickery. Besides, what right had I to interfere in the matter?

I had no right except such as my love for her might confer upon me. And as yet, even to myself, I hardly dared to confess this love. For very shame I could not. Why, but a little while back I had believed myself devotedly attached to Rosetta! Had I no reason to mistrust my sentiments, my impulses? Was I not absurdly susceptible, and weak and fickle as well? Before, I had admired and deemed I loved. It was different now. But I was moved by pity, perhaps, and was mistaking that also for love. I was very young, that was the plain truth of it, and knew very little—certainly not my own heart.

Yet how fondly I thought of her, of her beauty, her intelligence, her exquisite sweetness of look, of speech, of bearing, her modest goodness! How devoted she was to her father! By what a spirit of self-sacrifice she was possessed! And all she did was so simply done, so absolutely without consciousness or assumption—gravely and gracefully, as a matter of course, without aim at applause of any kind or even recognition—asking rather for non-recognition: a heroine without knowing it, an angel sublimely forgetful of her divinity.

It was thus I thought of Rachel Monck, finding curious pleasure in making her the theme of many rhapsodical reveries. The while a certain fear, nay, a conviction, haunted and depressed my imaginings. She loved, not me, but her cousin, Tony Wray.

He appeared at last in Rupert-street. He looked somewhat pale and harassed I thought. But I was greatly pleased to see him again.

"I've missed you somehow these last few days, old fellow," he said. "I couldn't well help it. I've a lot of things I want to talk to you about."

I was vexed at the time, I remember. I desired to speak to him of myself. But he was hardly in the mood for patient listen-

ing to me on that subject. He was bent upon talking about himself. I felt that I could not pour my cherished confessions into reluctant ears. So I sat silent and unsympathetic—even ruffled somewhat. But Tony, happily, did not perceive this.

"How are you?" he said. "It seems quite an age since we met." (It was four days). "It's quite a comfort to get back to this place. I've been busy, that's the fact. Earning money, or trying to. I didn't want to mention the subject until I'd made a start. The truth is, you must know, I've been getting rather hard up of late. That was one reason, not the only one, for I hold you accountable in part why I gave up that lodging of mine in the Vale of Health. You see, my uncle, Mr. Monck"—he stopped a moment, then asked hurriedly: "By-the-by, did I ever tell you, or do you know, that he's very ill, a great invalid, and has been so this long time past?"

"You've never told me, but I happen to know it." Then I added, by way, perhaps, of interjecting a fragment of the story I had to narrate, "Miss Monck told me."

"Ah, to be sure, Rachel told you. Yes, of course, I'd forgotten; you've seen Rachel." He knew it already then; my story had been anticipated, undermined. "Yes, Mr. Monck's been ill, seriously ill for a long time past. I fear there's no chance of his recovery."

"You fear that, Tony?"

"My dear fellow, I may almost say I'm sure, if one ever can be sure in such a case."

"Poor Rachel!" I thought.

"Well, in his state, of course, I haven't cared to trouble him about the interest on the trust money he's bound as my guardian—I think I did tell you all that before—to pay to me every quarter. I couldn't press him, you know, and so the matter's fallen into arrear. Between ourselves I may tell you this, as you know so much already; my poor uncle, what with his severe illness, and one thing and another, has let his affairs fall into sad confusion, or perhaps I may say they've fallen into confusion almost of themselves, and in any case he couldn't well have helped it. In fact he's hard up, and that's the occasion of my being hard up. Rachel has trouble enough to keep things going. She's helped me, as far as she could, with a little money on account, now and then; but I felt it cruel to be taking it from her, knowing what pressing need she had for it."

"Quite right, Tony. I'm glad to hear

you say that. But it is only like yourself."

"I'm pleased you see it in that light, old fellow. It's what you would have done yourself in like case."

"Indeed, I trust so, Tony; I feel sure of it. Anything I could do to help—" I checked myself, for I felt my speech was growing imprudently excited.

"We're of one mind about it, I see. Well, to avoid taxing Rachel, poor child, I looked about to see if I couldn't earn a trifle for myself, for the first time in my life. I'm not extravagant you know; I've very few debts. A good sum was handed to me just about the time you first came to London" ("My premium," I thought), "and I then settled a good many outstanding bills. But it's wonderful how difficult it is to earn ever so little money; and without some money, you know, there's no getting on at all. The fact is, I've begun two or three professions, generally considered to be of a lucrative kind; but somehow I've never carried them on to what I may call the money-making point. Law and medicine were, of course, out of the question; I'm not a qualified practitioner in either of those walks; and when I tried to turn my art to account—I didn't attempt to sell my poetry, I'm not quite a fool, or without a certain sense of humour; but with my art I did think there was something to be done—would you believe it?—not a soul would look at my sketches or put a price on them even to the amount of twopence-halfpenny. I'm boring you, I fear, but I haven't much more to say. I did find something to do at last; it's very humble, and the pay is ridiculously small in proportion to the labour. You'll never guess what it is. I colour plates for a fashionable milliner's magazine—ladies in pink bonnets, with a dab of carmine on their cheeks, in green silk dresses, with fringed parasols and streaks of dead gold to mark out their chains, ear-rings, and necklaces—you know the sort of thing? Well, that's what I'm doing now, and making money by it: a very, very little. Yet you can't think, taking it altogether, what a comfort the thing is to me. In my joy I'm almost tempted to be extravagant and order a pint of wine, to be paid for out of the first money I've ever earned in my life. The very first! Think of that, Master Duke, and envy, or at any rate congratulate me."

I did congratulate him, as he seemed to wish it; but I felt that for one who had

entertained such lofty aspirations, who had dreamt of becoming President of the Royal Academy, and living in Cavendish-square, this colouring of fashion plates for the milliner's magazine ("La Mode," it was called) was rather inferior occupation, by no means to be preferred, indeed, as a question of art, to Mauleverer's craft of cutting out black-shade portraits. Tony perhaps read my thoughts.

"It isn't much I know, old fellow," he said. "But then it's a beginning; that's how it should be looked at. And unlike my other beginnings it brings in a little money, just enough to keep me going for awhile till I can do something better. Besides, you know, needs must when the devil drives; and the devil, in these cases, I take it, always stands for poverty. Perhaps altogether as diabolical a thing as could be wished. Now about this pint of wine."

But, of course, I would not hear of his dissipating his first earnings in this extravagant way, and I enjoined him to take care of himself, to avoid over-fatigue, and to let me help him in his new labours so far as I could. I said I could easily learn how to colour the plates, and I promised to rise early so as to have some hours' work at them by daylight before breakfast every morning. Moreover, I implored him when he wanted money to borrow of me, pledging myself to assist him in this respect to the utmost of my means.

"What a good fellow you are, Duke," he said with a tremble in his voice. "I'm sure I've done nothing to deserve this. But that only makes your kindness all the greater. Still, you know, I couldn't let you work in the way you propose, and take the money which would properly be due to you. That wouldn't be fair at all. But I see how it is. Rachel's been talking to you about me."

I felt rather guilty. Was my kindness to Tony due simply to my love for Rachel? Surely not altogether. Yet in part it was, perhaps. Nevertheless my regard for Tony was genuine enough. I believed myself capable of real sacrifices on his account. Only, when Love and Friendship ride together upon one horse, it is quite certain that Friendship has to accept the inferior situation, and ride behind. I would do much for Tony. Yet I now knew that I would do much more for Rachel.

But he was quite unconscious of my love for his cousin.

"Rachel is a good little girl—the best

of girls. But she's over-anxious. Poor child! Perhaps circumstances have made her so. She worries herself about me; indeed, I may say she worries me about myself. I know I am not particularly strong; I never was. Neither in body nor in mind perhaps. But she'd make me out to be much worse than I really am. I can take care of myself, and I do. I can't bear to be always coddled and cosseted, and wrapped up in cotton wool, as though I were a sick child, or made of glass. But that's poor Rachel's way. She's always looking after me and taking charge of me, and calling herself my elder sister, which is rather absurd, because, as it happens, I'm a year or two older than she is."

It was plain he did not love Rachel. Loving her he could not have spoken of her in this way. It was cruel of him, I thought. No wonder there was a sad look in her face. No wonder her tears were so prompt to fall.

"But you saw Rachel; what did you think of her, Duke?"

"I thought her very beautiful."

"No, no, not beautiful. Rachel's not a beauty. But she's certainly nice-looking." It was very clear that he did not love her.

"I don't think I care much for brunettes," he went on. "I like blondes best; golden-haired creatures, with deep blue eyes, cherry lips, and exquisite rose and pearl-tinted transparent complexions. That's my notion of beauty. Loveliness of colour. All the best paints on one's palette go to the portraying of a blonde beauty. But one doesn't often see a really perfect blonde; or, indeed, anything really perfect. Rachel's a pretty figure; her movements are all graceful."

"Most graceful," I couldn't help interjecting.

"You noticed that? Her head's well set on her shoulders too; she carries herself finely, like a little queen. And her hands are very pretty. Yes, altogether she's certainly nice looking. But not a beauty, to my thinking. I can't allow that."

I disliked his calm, critical, connoisseur way of speaking of his cousin, though it was really without doubt harmless enough. It jarred, however, with the tenderness of my sentiments, with the staunchness of my convictions. In my eyes Rachel was perfection. Yet it was pleasant, too, to constitute her the topic of our conversation; to hear her name mentioned; to have her praises sounded even in Tony's apathetic



way; the while he was quite unsuspecting of the state of my heart.

"And, beautiful or not, she's thoroughly good and true."

"I'm confident of that."

"A better, I'll say a nobler, little woman never trod the earth. Poor child, she's been sorely tried: but she bears it all with the noblest courage. I honour and respect her greatly."

"I'm sure she is deserving of your highest praises, Tony, of universal esteem."

"I'm so glad you think with me, old fellow. That's one more subject of sympathy and agreement between us. Though, of course, I could hardly have expected that you would rate her as highly as I do, because I'm her cousin, and have known her as long as I can remember anything, and you have seen her but once, as I understand. But it seems you made a favourable impression upon her."

"I did? She spoke of me? What did she say? Tell me, Tony."

"How excited you are. One would think you were in love with poor Rachel. But that would be too absurd."

"Yes, too absurd. What did she say?"

"Well, not much. And I'm not sure of the precise words. But I think she said that she thought Mr. Nightingale was a gentlemanly young man—something to that effect."

It certainly wasn't much, and was, in a measure, disappointing. Still it was something.

"Girls, you know, are not very outspoken. I said it was nonsense talking about gentlemanly young men; that you were my friend, and a first-rate fellow. I gave her a good account of you, you may be sure."

I could have hugged him.

## WEST RIDING SKETCHES.

### TRESSY.

A LONG run of prosperity has permitted encroachments of selfishness in many Bington households, where otherwise the most perfect disinterestedness would have prevailed. For several years back the clash and whirl of the loom and the spinning-frame have known no cessation, except during the period prescribed by law, or on occasional feast-days. Wages have also been higher than at any previous period, so that many families, who once had the greatest difficulty in making ends meet, have been elevated into a sphere of plenty

such as, in the old days, they would have imagined unattainable. But, with the increase of money, with the extension of the power of being generous, in many instances there has been a corresponding increase of selfishness. Thrift is a fine old Yorkshire virtue, but when it expands into mere selfishness and greed it becomes a very objectionable vice indeed. It must not be imagined, however, that I would represent West Riding working life as being generally permeated with selfishness; I only wish to point out that the vice is strongly manifest—more strongly than it was in less prosperous times—amongst our factory operatives, though we have still sufficient large-heartedness, honesty, goodwill, and charity amongst us to entitle us to name those qualities as amongst the chief characteristics of West Riding life.

When the factory operative, who has all his life been struggling for a bare existence, suddenly finds himself and family earning "money enough and to spare," he is somewhat at a loss what to do with his surplus cash. If he be a man of an equable mind he will apportion that surplus variously. He will save a portion against that terrible rainy day with which the working man is constantly being overawed; he will devote something to the better provisioning of his table, and he will set apart other portions for improving the mind and adorning the body. Often, however, the recipient of good wages is too narrow in his ideas for this, so he seizes on one of these things only. He will, perhaps, keep on in his old way of scanty living, and carry every spare farthing to the savings-bank, or to the building society; he will, perhaps, avenge the hunger of the past by keeping a perpetual feast upon his table; or he may try to hide the remembrance of the rags of his youth by decking himself and family in costly garments and jewellery.

A parent who has really permitted himself to give way to any of the follies alluded to, looks upon his children as mere machines, whose working value is as much a matter of calculation as if they were so many looms or spindles. The law permits Johnny or Polly to be sent to the mill at eight years of age as a half-timer, and at thirteen as a full-timer, at such and such wages. Unless sickness intervenes, the calculation of their pecuniary value can be made with precision, and the parent whom I have in my mind's eye will be as exacting on the point as Shylock with his bond. On the other hand,

children of such parents do not get far into their teens before they begin to calculate also. Polly says to herself, "I am earning twelve or fifteen shillings a week, and paying every fraction over to my father, and seven or eight shillings a week will be as much as ever I shall cost him. I'll insist on paying for my board and lodging only, like Jenny Farsight and Ruth Blundell, and then I can get more clothes to go out in on a Sunday." Then comes the tug of selfishness with selfishness—the most bitter of all conflicts—and perhaps in the upshot Polly leaves her home, and prematurely sets up on her own account in lodgings.

At the head of this sketch is written the name of Tressy, which will at once be assumed to belong to some more refined creature than a common factory girl. Betty, Sarah, Jenny, Molly, or Dorothy might be all very well for such a girl, but Tressy, the diminutive for Theresa, applied to a girl who works in a mill, whose garments smell of oil, and whose language is broad and vulgar, would be a piece of presumption. So the "fine lady" would argue, but, fortunately for this world, "fine-lady-ism" is not allowed to rule, and the West Riding parent would very soon tell any one who interfered with his liberty on such a point that his child had as much right to a high-sounding name as anybody else. Of late years the Bettys, Graces, Phœbes, and Nancys, the Jonathans, Josephs, and Abrahams have been getting less numerous, while there has been a rapid increase of Lavinias, Lauras, Ethels, and Florences, Claudes, Algernons, and Augustuses, so that, after all, Tressy is not so surprising as at first sight it might appear.

Tressy, then, was a factory girl, the eldest of a family of four children. Thomas Drubford, her father, was originally an agricultural labourer in the North Riding, and early learnt the art of living on the smallest possible amount of food, but tiring, in course of time, of his hard life and scanty fare, migrated, in search of better fortune, to the manufacturing districts. There Thomas presently got employment, and began to feel what it was to live. Both he and his wife learned to mind a pair of looms, and were soon able to earn from twenty-five to thirty shillings per week between them. At first Thomas could hardly believe in his good fortune. On a Saturday, when he and his wife had got their wages safe home, he would be so overjoyed and surprised at being the possessor of such an amount of wealth, that he would

even fetch the neighbours in to feast their eyes upon it. As time wore on, however, Thomas got more accustomed to the sight, and began to have an ambition. Now ambition is a very fine steed to ride if you are a good equestrian, but it is calculated to upset the mental equilibrium of a rider who is not aided by a good ballast of intelligence and patience, and, it must be confessed, that Thomas was very poorly ballasted indeed. He started for a certain goal, it is true, but he only knew the hedge and ditch road to it. For awhile, the enriched agricultural labourer let his money go from him loosely, in the luxuries of eating, drinking, and wearing, but the moment his ambition seized him he settled into a parsimonious dolt. And what was this ambition? Was it to become a manufacturer, a member of a local board, or a magistrate? No, indeed; all that Thomas desired, was to become a cottage owner, a small landed proprietor.

Poor little Tressy early felt the effects of her father's ambition. While her mother was away at the mill, Tressy, who was put out "to mind" during working hours, was being alternately shouted at, shaken, and slapped by her nurse, who, besides minding Tressy and three others, washed the exceedingly dirty clothes of several mill-going families. At night she would be fetched home to be continually in the way of her mother, who had to scramble through her domestic duties, as best she could, in the small space of time allotted to her. Once in awhile, when it occurred to the father that Tressy would have to be taken care of if it were intended that she should live to earn any money towards buying his cottages, he would take her upon his knee, and in doleful tones "sing a song of sixpence" to her, or tell her the story of the little pig going to market, but, generally speaking, Tressy's happiest moments were those which she spent in sleep. Every morning, Sunday excepted, she would be dragged out of bed between five and six o'clock, summer or winter, hot or cold, and borne away to the soap-suds and the ill-temper, finishing her slumbers, perhaps, on a heap of dirty clothes, or tied in a chair. Thus the time went on, year succeeded year, until Tressy had reached her sixth summer, and three other Drubfords had been born to the soap-suds and the ill-temper. About this time Tressy discovered that there were such things as green fields, and woods, and rivers, and that there were such beautiful

objects as buttercups and daisies. How happy was little Tressy when she first fell in with the buttercups and daisies! How eagerly she plucked them! How tenderly she carried them! And how ruthlessly the she-dragon flung them into the street when Tressy, her little heart overflowing with joy, and her face radiant with smiles, held up her beautiful wild bouquet to the washerwoman's gaze! But, after that, Tressy seldom failed to make her escape from the side of the washing-tub when the weather was fine, and in this way she had a short experience of that fairy life which all children live at some time or other, whether born to the gutter or the palace. At seven years of age Tressy was sent to school, where for twopence a week she received the valuable teachings of a girl some three or four years her senior.

When Tressy was nearly eight her father and mother made her the subject of constant conversation, and, although the mother pleaded for something better than the mill for her daughter, Thomas would hear of nothing but Tressy being made a half-timer, in order that his store might be increased. At eight years of age, accordingly, Tressy "passed the doctor," and was introduced to the spindles. Corporal punishment was at that time much more in vogue than at present, and poor Tressy, who could not, try as she would, get through her half-days at the mill without an occasional yawn or sleepy nod, would frequently drop in for a smart "strapping" at the hands of the overlooker. Now and then her mother would see that she had been crying, and threaten to go and expostulate with the overlooker; but the father, who was in constant dread lest some unfortunate circumstance would happen to deprive him of Tressy's earnings, would generally put in his veto, by observing that he supposed she deserved all she got. As a half-timer, however, Tressy learned to read at last, and thereby discovered another new world. She also made companions, and, between reading and friendship, contrived to forget the discomforts of home. Thus matters went on until she reached the mature age of twelve, when her father and mother again laid their heads together. The father would have it that Tressy looked "fourteen, if a day;" the mother would plead that Tressy was "nobbut wake," and "couldn't eight hardly nowt," but Drubford, who had by this time (with his eleven years' struggling and pinching, and the sending to work of

two more of his children) saved about half the value of a cottage, insisted that his wife's pleadings were "all gammon;" so Tressy, by a not uncommon misrepresentation, was palmed off to the factory doctor as thirteen years old, and advanced to the dignity of full-timer. From spinning she was subsequently elevated to weaving, and in time could earn as much money as either of her parents. Thomas Drubford's income was thus largely augmented. Tressy worked hard at the loom all day, and at night worked quite as hard in washing, scrubbing, cleaning, or sewing, being permitted an hour or two now and then to walk in the fields with her companions, or to read the cheap periodicals. Before long, however, Thomas Drubford began to object to these companions. One of them "paid for her meat," and had a nice sum of money every week to call her own; and another had begun courting. These were examples which he must not permit Tressy to follow, if he meant to have his cottages, and that he meant that was more and more manifest every day, as the discomforts of his home amply testified.

But by-and-bye Tressy grew dissatisfied with her plain attire; she longed for brighter dresses and neater bonnets, and it soon became evident that a certain young man named Bob Dobson, who had hopes some day of being an overlooker, was the person whose eye she desired should see her in these better garments. Her father pooh-pooh'd her timidly-preferred requests. For Bob he expressed his unmitigated contempt, and would not allow him to enter the house. The combined influence of Bob and her female companions, however, made Tressy resent her father's selfishness, and, as many other girls had done before, she left home and went to live in lodgings. Her father first entreated and then commanded her to return home, but backed up by Bob and Co., she resisted. This was a sad blow to Drubford, but he tried to get compensation by extorting more work from the children who remained.

Drubford's wife, worn out by pinching and hard work, died soon afterwards, and Tressy went back to live with her father. Before another year was over he married again, taking to wife a woman who could perhaps earn a shilling a week more than his first wife. Tressy refused to live with her stepmother and went back to lodgings and independence, but not for long, unfortunately. One day she was obliged to leave her work and go home. Her health

seemed failing. Her cheeks had always been pale, but now they grew paler and hollower, and her eyes grew less bright. For a few months she lingered on at the mill, being off only a day now and then; but eventually she was obliged to hand the shuttle over to some one who had not undergone as much wear and tear as she had, and stay at home altogether. Month succeeded month and still she grew no better. Her savings went in doctoring, Bob's savings went also, and then her father, for whom she had in times gone by earned so much money towards the cottage he was now on the point of purchasing, was appealed to. "I shan't do a farthing!" was Thomas's reply; "she left my house of her own accord and has no claim upon me." Christian charity was invoked on behalf of the poor dying girl, but that did not hold out for long; then the law was appealed to by the sorrowing Bob, and that failed. The father was then hauled up before the guardians. His answer was, "She can come home when she likes, but I'll not do anything else for her." In this state of affairs the poor penniless girl went "home," but the peevishness of her step-mother and the groans of her father almost drove her mad. It was then that Bob came to her rescue again and took her back to lodgings, where she died of consumption a few weeks afterwards. Bob did his duty manfully. He had her buried in the quiet cemetery on the hill-side, cut a rude headstone for her grave with his own hands, and never afterwards opened his lips to Thomas Drubford, who has now got his cottage and his unpitied remorse as the reward of his selfishness.

This picture, with little variation, has been seen by most people who have been brought up in the West Riding factory district, and, I take it, that the wrong of the man who neglects his family in the way I have shown is almost as great as the wrong of the man who squanders the earnings of his family in drink. The latter has occasional intervals of kindness and affection, the former hardly ever.

#### KNOTS.

To the genuine West-Yorkshireman marriage is either a desperately serious or an immensely comic affair, a drama of deep pathos or a screaming farce. The denizen of the large town often learns to address his lady-love in language polite, if not poetic, and is as desperately earnest a lover as can be instanced. But, then, the type

Lothario musters strongly in the town, whereas in the country it is comparatively unknown. To the country, therefore, we must go for distinctive features.

The farmer's man and the farmer's maid have a very limited lovers' vocabulary, consisting mainly of chuckles, grins, sheep's eyes, and poutings. The foundryman and the blacksmith are also lovers who use few words; but those few are, as a rule, dreadfully emphatic. The factory lad and lass do their courting in a very systematic fashion. Once or twice a week, with the regularity of clockwork William Henry will present himself at or near the door of his sweetheart's abode, calling her out, perhaps, with a sharp whistle, and then the two will go for their evening's walk, in as methodical a manner as if they were performing some penitential duty. Very few words will be exchanged between them, and least of all will they talk of love, for it is the frequent boast of the women of the factory class that they would never, on any provocation, tell a man that they loved him. A girl who can be so imprudent as to tell a lover to his face that she is fond of him, is regarded as a bold-faced hussy who ought to be shunned, and of whom no good is possible. With such views prevailing, it is, perhaps, not astonishing that these country lovers should be such a tongue-tied race as they are.

There exists a time-honoured anecdote in the West Riding, illustrative of this silent style of courtship, which is worth repeating. A young man and young woman walked out together for the first time as lovers, by some mysterious understanding, felt but unexpressed. Only once during their walk was the silence between them interrupted, when the youth touchingly observed, "Treacle's risen, Mary." "Has it?" said Mary, affectionately. On they walked, through fields and country lanes, and nothing more was said until the time came for parting. Then the ardent lover mustered up courage to ask, "When mun I come agean?" "When treacle settles," was the calm response, and they went their several ways.

These silent courtships proceed more by divination than arrangement. After the pair have done the walking out penance for a length of time, the real intention of marriage will crop out by some such announcement as, "I've bowt a rocking-chair for thee, lass." This is sufficient; it is as effective as any fervent love avowal; and is followed by a general preparation



on the part of the girl as well. She will buy such things as looking-glasses, pots, pans, and ornaments out of her own money, and will perhaps also knit a hearth-rug or work a bed-quilt as her contribution to the furnishing of a home. But if any post-nuptial disagreement should take place she will bid her lord to "gi' me my awn an' I'll go," so that she never really sinks her proprietary rights in the effects got together by herself. Often this matter of furnishing will be indefinitely postponed, and the young people will get married, and live with "the old folks" of one side or the other. It rarely happens, however, that this style of living conduces to comfort. When a son takes a young wife home to his mother and sisters it is generally to make his bride's life unhappy. Any token of affection on her part will be ridiculed as "fond," while the slightest show of reserve will be regarded either as pride or coldness. The upshot invariably is, that the son quarrels with his kindred, and, rating himself for a fool that he ever married without first having "a home of his own," he is glad to settle in any poor cot that he can get, and furnish it by degrees.

In the matter of wedding, the villagers of West Yorkshire proceed variously, while in the large towns of the riding the customs attending the nuptial ceremony differ little from those of other populous towns. Marriage by banns is almost universal, and the act of entering the banns is styled "puttin' t' spurrins in." When once the "spurrins" have been put in, the friends of the parties concerned evince the keenest interest in the coming event. The wedding almost always takes place at the parish church, an opinion seeming to prevail that the knot connubial cannot be so securely tied at any other place. Each Sunday upon which the banns of marriage are published, friends of the contracting parties will go in numbers to hear "t' spurrins read over," and, as the clergyman reads out the two names, glances of delight will be exchanged, and the friends will go back to the bride or bridegroom elect with the joyful news that they have heard "t' names read aht." When the happy day arrives, the bride and bridegroom, and one or two other couples, set out on foot to the church, in the gayest of gay attire, the lads of the village crying after them :

"A wedding a-wool, a clog and a shoe,  
A pot full o' porridge, an' away they go."

The ladies of the party will be dressed in

raiment of very decided hues—blue, yellow, and green being favourite colours—and will wear bonnets exceedingly gorgeous as to trimming. The gentlemen will be sure to have white waistcoats and "flaming" neckties, and, wet or dry, will carry umbrellas, their hands grasping the stick half way up. All kinds of fun will be poked at them as they proceed in awkward procession; but they will go on their way, unconscious of any feeling but that they are cutting a tremendous dash. On reaching the church the bride will probably be chaffed on the "I will" subject. She will be told to clear her voice for the promise to obey, and she will threaten to say nothing of the kind. Perhaps, after the ceremony, she will pretend to have evaded the promise by substituting the word "bay" for "obey," or something of that kind. Sniggering is the rule during the performance of the ceremony with this class of people, and the parson is frequently called upon to admonish them for their levity. When the knot has been tied the wedding-party will parade the town, do a large amount of staring in at shop-windows, and then get away home for merriment.

Now and again a locality is put into a state of excitement by the marriage of the son or daughter of some rich manufacturer or merchant, when the wedding usages of society will be observed as closely as at St. George's, Hanover-square. Large numbers of spectators will be attracted to the church; bride, bridesmaids, and bridegroom will be almost stared out of countenance; the bells will be set a ringing; and, while the "happy pair" are speeding away to some distant honeymooning land, the parents will be giving a ball to their friends and a dinner to their workpeople.

Occasionally certain spots in the West Riding will be made lively for a day by a wedding of another description. Rusticity is, above everything else, fond of fun, and if a real rollicking wedding-party can be got up, it is delighted. Such an occasion presented itself not long ago in one of the villages of the northern division of the riding, when Sammy Trotters, the old besom-hawker, took to wife the green-grocer's widow, Betty Blobs—two ancient personages, whose persons and donkeys were as familiar to the inhabitants as was the old church-tower itself. When it became known that Sammy and Betty had "made a match of it," the people roared with glee. A deputation, representing the inhabitants, and consisting of a coal-dealer,

a railway porter, a blacksmith, and a landlord—a landlord is always essential to the success of an affair of this description—waited upon Sammy and Betty, congratulated them upon the conclusion of such a distinguished alliance, and assured them that their besoms and potatoes had left such an impression upon the hearts of the townspeople that they could not think of letting so important an event pass without an attempt being made to do honour to it; they begged, therefore, to be permitted to get up a triumphal marriage procession for the happy day. Sammy replied feelingly on behalf of the besoms and potatoes, and assured the deputation that he was overwhelmed, that he had never expected such a proof of their affection, that he could never forget their kindness, and that they might thenceforward command him, in respect of besoms and potatoes, to be lower than any other house in the trade. Betty wept until there was hardly a dry spot upon her apron, and then told the deputation to “get aght!” after which the deputation courteously retired, and did not burst into laughter for more than three minutes. At the end of the three minutes, however, the blacksmith sat himself down on a door-step, and held his sides, while his three companions gathered round him, shouted, roared, and doubled up.

When the wedding-day arrived, the promised procession was organised. The pot and pan band (twelve in number) headed the procession; a halberdier followed on horseback, and then came the representatives of various trades; a salt hawker with his wheelbarrow; a milkman carrying a pump handle; a hot-pie merchant holding one of his own pies on a toasting-fork; a vendor of “long strong leather bootlaces” wearing a collar of unlaced boots; a toffee-hawker with a dripping tin in one hand and a pot of treacle in the other; and many others. On the heels of the trades representatives came six variously-minded donkeys, pulling the old besom cart, which had been suitably decorated with pieces of broom, besom-handles, potatoes, cabbages, and turnips, emblematical of the union of the two houses of Trotters and Blobs. On this cart sat the bride and bridegroom, smiling and bowing. The rear was brought up by a number of male bridesmaids decked out in the bonnets and cloaks belonging to their grandmothers. The whole of the village turned out to see the procession start off, and half the village accompanied the revellers to the town

where the nuptial rites were actually performed. The clergyman not improbably scolded them for their unseemly conduct, but he did not, at all events, decline to perform the ceremony.

It is a wedding custom in the West Riding for the bridegroom to provide what is termed a “hen-drinking,” a tea in honour of the bride. The bridegroom will perhaps contribute a sovereign or a half-sovereign towards this hen-drinking, and the friends who constitute the party will each subscribe a small sum in addition. Rum and tea, and possibly that indigestible compound of lard and flour known as “fatty cake,” will be amongst the things which will go to form the success of the “drinking.”

The standard of matrimonial morality is much higher in West Yorkshire—especially in the rural districts—than in many other parts of the country. This is due in a great measure to the fact, that, in a village, everybody minds everybody else’s business as well as his own. If a case of conjugal infidelity be discovered—and it is almost sure to be discovered if it exist in such places—the “lads of the village” will not neglect to avenge it. The offender’s effigy will perhaps be paraded through the village and burnt at the culprit’s door, amidst shouts of contempt and derision, two or three nights in succession; and in very flagrant cases the antiquated practice known as “riding the steng” is resorted to. I have myself witnessed this practice within the last five years. The “steng” is a long pole, upon which the offender is set astride, and marched shoulder-high through the village, anybody being at liberty to salute the victim with a missile as he is borne along. A man rarely remains in a place after having been subjected to this humiliating punishment, preferring to take his “diminished head” to some remote region where he can live unknown. The feeling from which such practices as these were engendered has not yet departed from the races who inhabit West Yorkshire, and so long as it survives the morality of people must necessarily remain high.

#### THE FOUNTAIN.

UNDER arched interlacings of green boughs,  
Glad with the joy of June,  
Shred silver sliding with a tinkling tune  
From the curved shell lip, falleth, falleth ever  
Down rocky runnels, while the west wind soughs  
Perpetual refrain low.  
Loved haunt to be forgotten never, never,  
While her birds warble, while her best loved roses  
blow!

Here lit the snow-plumed doves that knew the fall  
Of her unhasty foot.  
Here at the still, dusk-haunted cedar's root,  
Sat she and sang when evening hush'd the air  
To listening quiet, and the lilies tall  
Lifted pale moonlit faces,  
Through the soft shadows, mystically fair  
Like seraph sentinels that watch in heavenly places.

The roses, ah! the roses; how they throng  
As then, when she would stand,  
Bloom-hidden shoulder high, while her white hand  
Tenderly, lingeringly, would pluck and pile,  
As though she did her darling blossoms wrong,  
That she their sweetness stole.  
Which yet on the fair pilferer seemed to smile,  
Seeing that at so gentle hands death scarce were dote.

The fountain flows, the roses throng, the birds  
Trill changefully as of old;  
But grey is summer's green, the sun-flush cold  
That bathes the red-rose heart. In vain I listen  
For sweetest lips that ever spake with words.  
Ah, fount, erewhile so glad,  
Thy silvery spray-drops that so shake and glisten,  
Show now like tears, thy tinkling song is strangely sad!

She loved thee fountain, and would stoop to lave  
Her rose-flush'd finger-tips  
In thy cool waters. See! a linnet sips,  
Where oft with back-drawn tresses spray besprent,  
And budded lips whose kiss made glad the wave,  
She too would bend to drink.  
Ah me! how oft at eve we twain have leant,  
Silent with very love above thy mossy brink!

How oft when shadows hid thee, and thy song  
Alone betrayed thee near,  
That shyly nestling head, so dear, so dear,  
Lay warm where now my lonely heart is cold;  
And virgin passion, innocent of wrong  
As some white seraph's prayer,  
Spake from those stainless lips that love made bold  
What time the night bird's flutings filled the odorous  
air.

The brimming wave that fills the flower-kiss'd font  
Is not more chastely clear  
Than were those radiant eyes. Shall I not fear  
A common sorrow, fond, tear-weak, despairing,  
Should wrong thy free fine spirit? Thou wert wont  
To scorn a feeble love,  
A sickly self-bound passion. Art thou wearing  
That same high dauntless look, in those bright fields  
above,

With which thou loved'st at here, when birds were waking  
To face the Orient sky?  
For thou hadst faith true love could never die,  
But was a fair possession for all time,  
A gift to greet the gods with, little shaking  
In presence of cold death;  
Sole amaranth of the earth, whose flower sublime  
Blooms deathless through the night that stayeth mortal  
breath.

Thou art, thou lovest, and I may not dare  
Too brokenly to mourn.  
I would not those sweet eyes should shade with scorn,  
That watch me from the heights I may not scale  
By any road save sorrow's tedious stair.  
I would not thou shouldst deem  
Darkness and distance cause my faith to fail,  
Or that thine absence makes thy life, thy love a dream.

Loved we? Nay, but we love. Disloyal I  
To wed thee with the past.  
Thou art. I feel thee through the shadow cast  
By yon slow sailing cloudlet o'er my face,

What time I lift my gaze to thy calm sky.  
Thy fountain floweth still,  
Thy roses bloom, and thou in that fair place,  
Art waiting me. Ah! love, I wait but Death's good-  
will.

## A LONDON PILGRIMAGE AMONG THE BOARDING-HOUSES.

### I. FAIRLY LAUNCHED.

How did the Wandering Jew employ his  
evenings; how and where did he spend his  
nights? No doubt his day's work was  
often harassing in the extreme. His feet  
must frequently have been tender, his back  
racked with lumbago, his knees bending  
with fatigue; and yet he travelled ever on-  
ward along the weary predestined route by  
day—but what happened to him after the  
sun had set? In all countries, eastern or  
otherwise, labour, however severe, except  
that of bakers and printers' devils and so  
forth, ends with set of sun. Surely the hap-  
less wanderer was no exception to the rule.  
Where then did he doff the dust-worn  
sandals of toil to don the list slippers of  
ease? Was he given to public-houses;  
did his proclivities lie in the direction of  
gin palaces; or did he not rather seek out  
some homely cot where apartments were  
provided for single gentlemen, and snore  
peacefully between the blankets until the  
newborn sun should arouse him for the  
labours of the morrow?

Though not a Jew I am a wanderer—not,  
it is true, among peaks or icebound glaciers.  
I am not a member of the Alpine Club, or a  
holder of Cook's coupons, but only a hum-  
drum cockney wayfarer, groping amid the  
throng of fellow-mortals, seeking to illu-  
minate with humble penny rushlight the  
coigns of vantage of my neighbours, flick-  
ing its flame into a flare on discovering  
some worthy trait, sadly quenching it into  
blue smoke in the presence of short-  
comings. I am in London an infinitesimal  
speck on a huge ant-hill, enjoying, like the  
rest, my own corner with a proprietor's  
love, staring vacantly as I pass at the hun-  
dreds on hundreds of blank streets that  
form our metropolis, which seem to return  
my stare defiantly. Yes, these rows of  
tenements occupied by passions, vices, and  
virtues such as mine, have hitherto been a  
closed book to me, but shall be so no more;  
and so of a sudden, with an impulse worthy  
of a new Columbus, or of a blossoming  
Alexander, bright with visions of new fields  
to conquer, I gird up my limbs, trim my  
net, arrange my pins and cork, and start  
on a voyage of adventure in search of

specimens from the crowds of strangers I jostle daily in the street. By nature I am cynical, not to say morose, and knowing well that society is absolutely needful for the lightening of the shadows of my character, and the softening of those wrinkles that will net themselves about my brow, I came at length to settle in my own mind that I would mix with those who had hitherto been in my world, not of it, that I would seek out a boarding-house in some unimpeachable but remote locality, where I might hear the music of the human voice warbling a new tune, and study fresh phases of that interesting insect without wing-cases whose generic name is Man.

I took a cab and a carpet-bag and culled names from the list in the Directory, for I did not then know, what sad experience taught me later on, that the real boarding-house never advertises, but keeps up its connexion in some mysterious manner, like a branch of a secret society, by means of winks and cabalistic signs. Neither, in those early days, was I aware that boarding-house keepers are fastidious people, requiring an exchange of unexceptionable references before they will consent to receive into their bosom any traveller, however dust-stained or needing rest. Thus I set forth on my travels, clothed with innocence as with a garment, plunging compassless into the vast desert of Bloomsbury, meandering around the square oases, past the purling drinking-fountain brooks, until in a grim street of awful respectability, quite locked up with a petrified layer of antique patrician ice, I stopped at a frozen door, over which in stalactite characters stood the words, "Furnished Apartments for Gentlemen." I rang a ghostly peal; two faded maids peered from an upper window. Presently, as with the reverberating echo of a tomb, the portal swung upon its hinges, and a middle-aged female with sallow cheeks demanded my business. "Well," I murmured to myself, "at all events everything is en suite. That's a comfort, for I like my local colour well preserved," and proceeded to apply for a furnished apartment for a gentleman. "Oh," she said, with a hectic flush, and a sigh like a draught passed through a refrigerator, "so you want to come to us. I'll call mother." I waited in a terrible dining-room, where a small jug of blue milk, stranded side by side with an emaciated French roll on a waste of oil-cloth, told of some prospective spectral feast, until presently a rustling skirt announced the advent of the lady of the

house. A forbidding, pinched old lady in a chestnut front, glorious in a high mauve cap with nodding bugles, a wrinkled old pair of gloves, and a grand silk shawl. "You want a room," she softly purred. "A guinea a week on the fourth floor with partial board if needed. My daughter attends to the gentlemen, who are nearly all away now on their holiday. One only left, a foreign one over here to learn the language. You speak French of course, and German. Every gentleman should do that. Who is your reference? He must be unexceptionable."

I stammered feebly that I had none, and began to feel dreadfully like a characterless servant out of place, when my meditations were summarily cut short by the velvet voice, which said implacably, "Oh, no! thank you. In London we can't do that. A respectable house with a widowed mistress must keep its place, and no one without references comes in here. I could not do it, really. Eliza, show out the person," and, before I knew where I was, the gorgon of respectability had swept away, the terrible "Shut, Sesame," had been spoken, and I stood ruefully in the pale street beside my hansom cab. A few houses down, a similar placard attracted me, and the door soon opened to my ring. After a word or two with the maid, a shrill voice called from above, "What? A lodger? Wait a minute," and a counterpart of the gorgon skimmed down, wreathed in smiles, and minus the respectable appearance. "He, he!" she grinned, displaying an outrageously false set of teeth, "a young brother you want to place with us?" for wisdom had by this time taught me to invent a fable. "How old is he? Eighteen, you say; coming to town to study, of course, and wants society to keep him out of mischief. I understand; and you want to try the place a day or two to see if it would suit? Well, my gentlemen prefer keeping to themselves; it's more aristocratic-like, if not so gay; but if you wish it, he shall live with me and my husband, and the two girls. He's not dangerous, I hope?" and the old wretch giggled fiendishly, as I caught sight of the husband through a door—a heavy man in shirt-sleeves, with receding forehead and underhung jaw, drinking bottled beer. "Heavens!" I thought to myself, "if my fiction were true! If I had an inexperienced lad to cast rudderless on the town, into what better company than this could I throw him, to insure that *facilis descensus*



which should break his country mother's heart. The poor ladies pray and weep over the ducklings fluttering away into the great troubled pond. Would they ever let their cherished boys go at all if they realised the harpies so ready to swoop down on them? "Thank you, no," I answered curtly, and turned on my heel, leaving the old harridan leering in the passage. A long drive, up one street and down another, round all the still squares in Bloomsbury, with their heavy tranquil shade, and buckramed air, and packs of stealthy cats; up and down Gower-street, round endless crescents, into queer, blind alleys, till at length I espied a brass plate labelled "Apartments," on the door of a house with a thoroughly typical boarding-house exterior. An almost hopeless knock is answered by a slatternly maid-of-all-work, who says, "Yes, come in, mussis will speak to you." This time quite a different landlady presented herself, a highly-coloured, full-blown woman, a trifle scant of breath, with curtains of neutral hair flapping untidily around her face, relieved by ambushes of tufts and hair-pins, who ushers me into a dark parlour strewn with a confusion of berlin-wool, and canvas, and knitting. She flounced down on a wheezy sofa, took up a stray piece of fancy work, and apparently settled down to a cosy chat, dreamily working on, and smiling through me at the wall. "Yer brother? Oh, I know the sort of thing. Bless you, I've had lots of 'em thro' my hands. Now do make yerself comfortable. If he's like you I know we should get on. I cook and look after the house, though you wouldn't think it in these clothes, but I tidy myself up, and get quite smart. Yes, I'm dearly fond of woolwork. Do you ever look at the patterns in the Queen newspaper? Very pretty. No, I can't bear hemming; put out my husband's things. Can't do them, you know. He grumbles a little at times, but there, if I cook and drudge all morning, surely I may amuse myself my own way of an afternoon. Excuse me, but what's that going on outside? Ah, yes, two boys fighting as usual. They always seem to come here to fight. Very provoking, you know. I do like gentlemen—wouldn't have lady lodgers for the world, oh dear no. Too much trouble. But I can always make gentlemen comfortable. They're dear creatures. Oh dear no! Not foreigners. I hate 'em. Black wool comes off on the fingers, don't it?" And so she gabbled on unceasingly, oblivious

apparently of the fact that I was not paying a morning call. "The rooms? Bless me, yes. You shall see 'em. Dear, dear, I've greased my gown again. Preparing for Sunday dinner, you know. So busy on Saturday and Friday—cleaning up day. Really it's too bad that I should do such work—was born to better things. Here is one of my gentlemen's rooms. A piano, you see, and concertina. Don't mind the litter. I tell him to put unsightly things under the bed, but he won't you know. Very distressing. Can't bear soiled linen. Very pretty garden, if small. You'll come yourself and try? Oh, do. It would be nice. Oh dear no, they have tea in their rooms, and sit in my parlour when they like. But I won't have their horrid smoking there, and they put their boots upon the cushions, which makes them look so tumbled. This is the room your brother will have. Airy and nice. You see one of my gentlemen's linen laid out here now. I wish they wouldn't quarrel so sometimes! Nice shirts, ain't they? Oh, bless you, he's well off, and never complains, and uses wax candles that he buys himself, and windsor-soap, and scent, and things—quite the gentleman. You don't think it'll suit? Why not try? Partial board. Tea, sugar, toast, and that sort of thing, eighteen shillings a week. You won't come? Very well," and the listless, garrulous lady, smiling blandly, shaking her hairflaps from her face, returned to her sofa and her berlin-wool, as I bowed myself out, and evening was darkling to night.

Another turn brought me to a large establishment opposite a church, the centre of a network of winding little streets. Not a light glimmered through any window, although it was barely half-past ten o'clock. I knocked, however, and presently a dim flicker was observable through a fanlight, a trailing footfall became audible scrunching from below, and a vision of a dirty girl appeared with a black smudge across one eye, and a nautical hitch of hanging garments. Then her light having playfully been extinguished by a passing gust, we were left to commence our colloquy in tenebris. "You want a bedroom. Yes; I dare say you can come in, though it's a queer time of night to call. Your room; two shillings must be paid in advance, please, as you've no reference. You can settle the rest with missus in the morning." Half-way up a bare unlighted stone staircase she paused, my bag in one hand, a tin candlestick with half an inch of tallow

dip in the other, to contemplate my outer man through her unobliterated visual organ. "If missus don't like you, you'll have to step it, you know." "All right," I acquiesced, and followed. On the next landing she stopped again, while I examined rows of phantom boots, marvelling at such early retiring to rest, and said, doubtfully trimming the candle with her fingers, "We're serious people. No goings out at night. This is temperance, you know." Being fairly in for it, I bowed my head, and she finally landed me in a little garret occupied by an iron bed, a chair, a washing-stand, on an uncarpeted floor, and an immense text from Scripture framed upon the wall. Under this again hung a smaller placard, enunciating strict temperance principles, combined with early hours, and a certainly very moderate tariff of prices. "Have you many lodgers?" I asked, wishing to shake off the feeling of inhospitality which glared from every flower of the wall-paper. "Two shillings, please, paid in advance, and no smoking allowed," was the uncompromising rejoinder. "No use a going down-stairs now. Gas turned off at eleven. Prayers and breakfast at eight. Good night." The door was closed, the trailing tread echoed through darkness into silence, and I was left alone with half an inch of tallow candle to inspect my filthy garret, and shudder over getting into bed. "A pilgrimage into the unknown is all very well," I thought, "but I would that some other deity than dirt would preside over my footsteps." Although matriculating for a stoic, I confess at this juncture to visions of childhood, to unpleasant reminiscences of first night at school, and its attendant horrors, which took so firm a hold upon me that I found myself arguing inwardly that I was in no way imprisoned, that even now, if I chose, I could seize my yet unopened bag, and depart to some rollicking disreputable little club, where joyous souls assemble, where spirits and water perfume the air, and clouds of tobacco smoke roll lazily through open windows. But it was silly. A fine traveller, forsooth, to break down at the first stage! The feeling must be overcome, and an examination of the premises might not prove unamusing. What a gloomy house! Each wall appears to turn its back on you, each grim chair and table to turn its head away. What serious-looking boots along the breezy passage, square-toed, heavy, country-made! What desperately clammy woodwork, guiltless of "doing-up"

for years! And what an undelectable couch, with thin paillasse, whose interior had become hardened into knotted lumps from long neglect, and ceaseless wear and tear. A pillow worthy of Mrs. Bouncer, and those singular-looking sheets—what strange thing was the matter with them? They seemed clean and tidy enough, and yet— The single towel was the same. Heavens! It was too true. For economy's sake, the linen had not been washed since used by the last occupant, had only been ironed and the creases smoothed away. Then these abstainers drink up all their water, leaving none to mix with soap. What a hideous creed! If temperance induces such habits as these, let us wildly rollick, let us drown care in the bowl for evermore, and die hopelessly in debt to our washerwoman. But the half-inch of candle had dwindled into a greasy mash, and flickered out, leaving behind an evil smell, and so there was nothing for it but to bless the darkness, and seek oblivion as best one might.

Long before seven o'clock I had ceased playing at being asleep, had tossed myself into headache, and was reconnoitring the dead-alive thoroughfare which so fitly framed my teetotal boarding-house. It was Sunday morning; doors opened and closed, and I remembered that prayers and breakfast were at eight. All the rows of shoes had disappeared, my own among the rest, and not having with me a second pair, I was forced to bawl for them over the banisters, as my garret boasted of no bell. Presently, breathless, arrived my unsympathising friend of the night before, with another smudge across the other eye, so that she appeared to wear blinkers, armed with a large pair of list slippers, such as would have been insulting to an elephant. "Shoes? oh yes," she said, "you'll find them down-stairs;" and off she whisked herself, leaving me to follow in the slippers with a very good imitation of her own slatternly trailing tread. The newspapers of which I had caught a glimpse the previous evening had been piously removed, to be replaced by the Unitarian Freeman, the Baptist Record, and the like, while around a long table sat some sixteen persons, remarkable for their angularity, gazing at a tall Scotch divine, who appropriately occupied a chair under Mr. Cruikshank's amazing cartoon of The Triumph of Bacchus. After a text had been read and expounded, breakfast made its appearance, a few late ones slunk into

their seats, and every one assumed an interest in his neighbour's health. Different places of worship were discussed. An old lady, who ought for very modesty to have covered up her poll under a cap, but who preferred emulating the wizened corkscrew curls of Aunt Sally, asked me, with threatening brow, what church I proposed attending. My answer of Westminster Abbey met with a murmur of general condemnation, until the Scotch divine, who really seemed affable enough at bottom, suggested leniently that to a stranger in London the sight might not be unedifying. A pale, thin gentleman, with weak eyes and hair, volunteered to cut up the brown bread, and hacked away right manfully, until nipped in the bud by a tart observation from his better-half, to the effect that if he didn't wait for the eggs "it would get dry;" upon which he subsided into benevolent inanity, reflecting probably that Sunday morning's stale bread could not become much drier than it already was. One old gentleman was very deaf, and insisted upon every trivial remark being translated into his ear in stentorian tones.

"What do you say, sir—what?"

"I said I hoped you had slept well."

"What?—I am hard of hearing."

"Slept well."

"What?"

"Slept well—oh, dear!"

And the would-be hewer of bread blushed up to the eyes and simpered into his teacup. But now began a wonderful ceremony. All the gentlemen got up and gravely proceeded to don their boots, leaving an avenue of slippers all round the room, the ladies looking on the while with a critical air, until I felt red all over, and somehow couldn't get my shoes on, but at last every one was ready and vanished from the scene, to be seen no more until one o'clock dinner, when they all resumed their places with a self-satisfied odour-of-sanctity aspect, combined with a precise demeanour and elaborately adjusted hair. Cold beef, pickles, salad, cucumber; nothing warm but the drinking water, the only beverage apparent. The divine who sat on my right hand observing my distaste for this tepid fluid, suggested temperance champagne, a bottle of which I accordingly ordered, although a single sip made me vow a vendetta against that holy man for life, a feeling by no means modified when he appropriated the sickly mawkish stuff, taking to it apparently very kindly. It was like cider and brown sugar, with a

dash of soda to infuse a sparkle. I watched in hopes of his being taken ill, but the exhilarating draught only unlocked his tongue, for he launched incontinentally into anathemas against licensed victuallers and their newly-elected M.P.'s, vowing that beer was death and sherry destruction, whilst as for whisky, pains yet unimagined would follow its use, in this world and the next. But he approved of the divine weed, declaring that the rule was ridiculous which obtained in the establishment under whose roof we sat, and that tobacco moderately enjoyed hurts no one. "No more does beer," I felt inclined to add, but prudently held my peace. Washed down with tepid water, cold beef and cucumber is unappetising food, and so I recklessly told my friend that our meal once over I should proceed to the nearest public-house and order a glass of brandy.

"Come up to the lavatory," he said, "and wash your hands, and we will enjoy a pipe presently together."

I followed, and to my extreme surprise saw him draw from a lock-up receptacle an unmistakable black bottle, containing undeniable logwood port. He gave me a tooth-glass full, and when I had swallowed it, imbibed one himself, and sighing, replaced the bottle in its lurking-place.

"But how," I said, timidly, "do you combine your principles with your actions, for I think you said——"

"My friend," he answered, confidentially, "I take it medicinally. I see no harm in you and I, who are educated men, and who will not exceed, taking a glass of wine after dinner just to comfort ourselves. But the line is fine and easily distorted, and so for the sake of example, and for the edification of the weaker brethren, I usually go without."

"And so do most of you," I ejaculated to myself; "you go without, for you go outside and do it on the sly."

Of course there are good temperance men, as there are good and earnest men in every movement belonging to every class or grade of life. But my own experience on this occasion told the other way, the occupants of that boarding-house seeming a self-sufficient, hypocritical set, weighed down with their own perfection, attending overmuch to the outside of the cup and platter, and thinking nothing of the dirty beds up-stairs. In the visitors' book which lay in the common room, there were some very odd remarks. For instance, Jane

Holloway wrote, "Peaceable and quiet. A home away from home. Persons of serious turn will find all they need." A lady, whose signature was Mary B., had evidently found all she wanted, for she wrote, "This place is full of tender remembrances to me." Could she be the chosen one of the gentleman who gushed forth on another page, "On my former visit I enjoyed myself much more than on this occasion. I had just married, and had my dear young wife with me." Another said, "Remarkably good attendant; she gives a hearty response to any remark." One individual at least appears to have shared my own feelings, for he jotted down, "Fearful affair altogether. Never coming again"—a sentiment which I so cordially echoed, that, holding in dreadful remembrance the terrors of my dormitory above, I forthwith paid a modest bill of some nine shillings and put forth upon the world once more.

#### IMAGINATIVE MEDICINE.

WE may reasonably give this name to the medicines, panaceas, elixirs, charms, and amulets which, if they act at all upon bodily and mental maladies, do so through the medium of the imagination. The curious volumes by Mr. Jeaffreson and Mr. Timbs concerning doctors, quacks, and patients, are crowded with illustrative instances; and the medical journals are always adding to the store, chiefly for the purpose of exposing and denouncing quackeries. Patients, strongly impressed with a belief that a particular medicament will do them good, often persuade themselves that this result has really been attained by taking the substance in question; and it becomes somewhat difficult to disentangle the actual facts of cure or no cure. Unfortunately quacks are also ready to take advantage of this credulous state of feeling. In some cases, however, practitioners are as honest in their belief as the patients themselves.

Bishop Berkeley, a hundred and thirty years ago, published a work *On the Virtues of Tar Water*, and a few months before his death he published *Further Thoughts on Tar Water*. That he honestly believed all he said is manifest enough. His recipe was to put a quart of tar in a gallon of water, stir them well, allow the mixture to settle, pour off the clear liquor from the sediment, and to drink five or six glasses of this liquor or tar water per day.

That tar is useful in many forms of disease is known to medical men; but the good Bishop of Cloyne went further, and credited it with the qualities of a universal panacea. He believed that tar contains a large percentage of the "vital element of the universe," pure invisible fire, "the most subtle of bodies." He mixed up much of the mysticism of the Neo-Platonic philosophy with the functions and maladies of the human body; the learned studied his philosophy, but the unlearned were much taken with his tar water, which speedily had an enormous success. There was a "Tar Water Warehouse" in Bury-street, St. James's; and the reputed cures were prodigious. If people imagined themselves to be cured, it was hard to tell them that they were not; and yet the maladies for which this tar water was taken as a specific included many which physicians now-a-days believe would be quite untouched by it. Medical men, philosophers, men of science, wits, satirists, attacked the bishop's theory. Walpole wrote an epigram on it:

Who dare deride what pious Cloyne has done?  
The Church shall rise and vindicate her son;  
She tells us all her bishops shepherds are,  
And shepherds heal their rotten sheep with tar.

The fame of tar water gradually died out.

The Mandrake had a long reign of popularity. The Chinese physicians assert that this plant possesses the faculty of renovating exhausted constitutions. Some nations have believed that the root of the mandrake, if wholly dislodged from the ground, becomes the good genius of the possessor, not only curing a host of maladies, but discovering hidden treasures, doubling the amount of money locked up in a box, keeping off evil spirits, acting as a love-charm, and rendering several other notable services.

The Earth-bath once had an amazing run. About a century ago a London empiric opened a "Temple of Health" in Pall Mall, where he gave lectures on health at the extravagant charge of two guineas for admission, which fee many wealthy simpletons were willing to pay. Among other attractions he enlisted the services of a beautiful woman, said to have been that equivocal person who afterwards became Lady Hamilton. Many kinds of mountebank fraud were exhibited at this place; the last of which was earth bathing. He and the Goddess of Health immersed themselves to the chin in warm earth, he with his hair full dressed and powdered,



she with the fashionable coiffure. How many dupes honestly believed in their own cure by such means, history has not recorded; but the admission to the "Temple" gradually fell from two guineas to one shilling, and then the earth-bath died out—not, however, before the "lady" had run much chance of ruining her health by this peculiar kind of bathing.

The Toad has had its day of importance, in the minds of those who look for specifics against diseases; and so has the toad-stone, which was described by Joanna Baillie in a letter to Sir Walter Scott as "a celebrated amulet, which was never lent to any one unless upon a bond for a thousand marks for its being safely restored. It was sovereign for protecting new-born children and their mothers from the power of the fairies; and has been repeatedly borrowed from my mother for this purpose." This amulet was described as being a convex circular stone, rather less than three-quarters of an inch in diameter, semi-transparent, dark grey, and apparently silicious composition; it was set in a massive silver thumb ring. Besides its virtues as a charm for keeping off wicked fairies, this toad-stone was believed to be a specific against diseases of the kidney's; it was immersed in a cup of water, and the water then quaffed off.

The Eagle-stone bore some analogy to the toad-stone. Pliny the naturalist, who had an abundant belief in wonderful medicines, gravely stated that a round perforated stone, if found in an eagle's nest, will prove to be a specific against disease, and a charm against shipwreck and other disasters. Mr. Timbs quotes a passage from Charlotte Smith, to the following effect: "An acquaintance of mine possessed an amulet of this description, for which his mother had paid a considerable sum. It was small, brown, and when shaken rattled as though another stone was enclosed within it. A riband was usually passed through its perforation; and it was said to possess more virtues than I can pretend to enumerate."

Fish charms have been met with among many nations. The fish called the bull-head is used by some of the Russian peasants as a charm against fever. Again, if suspended horizontally, and carefully balanced by a single thread, while allowed some freedom of motion, the fish is credited with the power of indicating, by the direction of the head, the point of the compass from which the wind will blow. Many

kinds of fish have two hard bones just within the sides of the head; and one species, the *maigre*, has these bones larger in proportion than most others. These two bones, called colic stones, are in some countries regarded to possess medicinal virtues; mounted in gold, and hung round the neck, they are a specific for the colic. But this peculiarity attaches to them: they must have been received as a gift; if purchased, they do not possess the magic virtue.

The Lee Penny has had much celebrity among curative agencies. It is a dark red triangular stone, measuring about half an inch along each side; and is set in a silver coin. This coin, though much defaced, is supposed to be a shilling of Edward the First, and has been in the possession of the Lee family for centuries. It used to be believed that if this stone were dipped in water, the water, when drank, would cure all diseases in cattle, and the bite of a mad dog. Once, when the plague was at Newcastle, the inhabitants begged the loan of the Lee Penny, leaving a large sum of money as bond for its safety; it "did so much good," that the citizens wished to purchase and retain it for the sum deposited; but this the owner declined. One Lady Baird, of Saughton Hall, near Edinburgh, was bitten by a mad dog, and was in a sad way about it; she begged the loan of the Lee Penny, steeped it in water, drank the water and even bathed in it, and continued this course for six weeks; either by the effect of the water or of her imagination, of her natural good health or of an improved regimen, she recovered; but the Lee Penny received all the praise. In one year (the date unfortunately not given), Mr. Hamilton, of Raplock, cited Sir James Lockhart, of Lee, to appear before the Synod of Glasgow, and answer to the charge of encouraging and indulging in superstition by the use of the Lee Penny. The Synod found on inquiry, that the virtue was attributed to the water in which the stone was dipped, that no words were uttered such as are used by charmers and sorcerers; they, therefore, acquitted Sir James, on the ground that "in nature there are many things said to work strange effects, whereof no humane wit can give a reason: it having pleased God to give unto stones and herbes a special vertue for the healinge of many infirmities in man and beast."

Medicinal rings were at one time very seriously believed in. Physicians were

went to wear finger rings, in which stones were set; and these stones were credited with the possession of many virtues. Sometimes the patient was simply touched with the ring; sometimes he put it on his finger for awhile. Many a patient has worn such a ring to stop an hemorrhage, which sedatives, absorbents, and astringents alike failed to allay; if the desired result followed, the ring was unreservedly regarded as the healing agent; if the cure did not follow, we are told nothing about it; for in these matters

What is hit is history;  
But what is miss'd is mystery!

A wine-coloured amethyst, set in a ring, was a specific against intoxication and its consequences; a hyacinth stone, similarly set, acted as a charm to produce sleep; an agate had wonderful power in curing amaurosis and other diseases of the eye; a jasper showed its value in cases of dropsy and fever; while a coral was an antidote against nervousness and causeless fears. That many imaginative cures have been wrought by such means, who can deny? Even if the patient only gets a little better, and attributes the healing influence to the stone in the ring, he may be right so far as this—that the influence exerts itself through the imagination.

The Touch is, historically speaking, one of the most curious examples of imaginative cures, on account of its attributed connexion with the Royal Family of England. A belief prevailed for many centuries that the British sovereign had the power of curing disease by touching the part affected. Especially was this the case in regard to the disease known as scrofula or king's evil. Edward the Confessor, nine centuries ago, "touched" many of his subjects. Chroniclers differed in opinion on the question, whether this power was due to the special piety of Edward, or whether it was inherent in the blood of the Saxon kings. To what extent the Norman kings followed the example is not known; but Henry the Second certainly "touched." The ceremony was more or less continued to the eighteenth century. The Stuarts believed in it, or at any rate accommodated the belief of it in the minds of other persons. William the Third did not. Macaulay says that, when the king heard that his palace was besieged by a crowd of sick persons towards the close of Lent, he exclaimed, "It is a silly superstition; give the poor creatures some money, and send them away." And when, on a particular occasion, a patient was importuning for a

touch, William said, "God give you better health—and more sense." How far the hope of some little pecuniary advantage influenced the patient, it would be difficult to decide; for Charles the Second, who "touched" no fewer than twenty thousand persons in the first four years after his restoration, is believed to have been rather liberal in giving money to them; and the applicants were many more in number than those who were really afflicted with king's evil. One form of the belief was that, if the sovereign touched a particular coin, it became thereafter a panacea against king's evil; several such coins, called royal touch-pieces, are preserved in the British Museum. Queen Anne touched no less a person than Doctor Johnson, or, to speak more exactly, a child of three years old, who afterwards became the great lexicographer. In a prayer-book of the Church of England, printed during the reign of that sovereign, there is printed a service "At the Healing," in which these instructions are given: "Then shall the infirm persons, one by one, be presented to the queen upon their knees; and as every one is presented, and while the queen is laying her hands upon them, and putting the gold about their necks, the chaplain that officiates, turning himself to her majesty, shall say the words following: 'God give a blessing to this work, and grant that these sick persons, on whom the queen lays her hands, may recover, through Jesus Christ our Lord.'" Here the touch is at once a royal and a religious ceremony. An old man, witness at a trial, averred that when Queen Anne was at Oxford, she touched him (then a child) for the evil; he added that he did not believe himself to have had the evil, but "his parents were poor, and had no objection to a bit of gold." If this means that a bit of gold accompanied the touch, we need not wonder that the touching was popular among the poor. The Pretender, in the time of George the First, had a touch-piece cast or stamped for him, in order that he might exercise the mystic power of the royal touch as well as the (hoped-for) substantial power. Touching for the evil does not appear to have been practised in England after the demise of Queen Anne. A similar healing power was claimed by many of the French monarchs, from Clovis the First down to Louis the Fourteenth. Even below the rank of royalty, the attribution of this power may be met with in persons of distinguished rank or exceptional piety; and there may

still be found old women in our country villages who claim to be able to cure warts and other skin affections by simply stroking the affected part with the hand.

The Caul is one of the most remarkable existing evidences of the belief in a curative influence which, supposing it to be possessed at all, can only act through the imagination. Those who search the columns of the Times for curiosities will meet with advertisements such as the following: "A child's caul for sale." "A child's caul to be disposed of; a well-known preservative against drowning, &c.; price ten guineas." "To mariners, &c.; to be sold, a child's caul, price fifteen guineas." "To be sold, a child's caul; to save gentlemen trouble, price thirty pounds." "A child's caul to be sold for fifteen pounds." Persons who know nothing of this subject may wonder what a child's caul may be. This name is given to a membrane which is sometimes found on the head of an infant at birth, nearly encompassing the head. It is a rare occurrence, and the rarity has led to great importance being attached to it. The child itself will be lucky; and the owner of the caul in after years will be shielded from many troubles that affect his neighbours. The superstition came from the East, where it had its origin in remote ages. Many diseases were believed to be curable by the wearing of a caul; and to this day some sailors—even English sailors in the second half of the nineteenth century—have a faith in the efficacy of a child's caul to preserve them from drowning at sea. Sir John Offley, of Madeley Manor, in Staffordshire, bequeathed a caul as a heirloom, in a will proved in 1658: "I will and devise one jewell done all in gold, enameled, wherein there is a caul that covered my face and shoulders when I first came into the world, the use thereof to my loving daughter, the Lady Elizabeth Jenny, so long as she shall live; and after her decease, the use likewise to her son, Offley Jenny, during his natural life; and after his decease to my own right heirs male for ever; and so from heir to heir to be left so long as it shall please God of his goodness to continue any heir male of my name; desiring the same jewell to be not conceded nor sold by any of them." A child two years old fell into a well near Romford, and floated face uppermost on the face of the water, whence he was rescued by his mother. The good woman at once attributed the preservation of her boy to the fact that he had been born with a caul.

The readers of Hood's Whims and Oddities will remember *The Sea Spell*, in which, imitating the style of the old ballads, he narrates a sea story, but pokes his fun in every stanza at the superstition of the child's caul.

Charms, amulets, talismans, and phylacteries all belong to the list of articles which produce imaginative cures; seeing that the persons who trust to them believe in some good obtainable from them, in purse or in person, in health or in welfare; and if the good does come, most assuredly the imagination is the channel through which it approaches. Two or three years ago, at a town in Worcestershire, after the inquest on the body of a man drowned in the Severn, a woman applied to the chief constable for permission to draw the hand of her son, a boy of eight or nine years of age, nine times across the dead man's throat, in order to bring about the removal of a wen from the boy's neck! In another instance, in the same county, this was actually done, with fatal results; for the man had died of typhoid fever, which was in this way communicated to several living persons. A ring made of the hinge of a coffin, and a rusty old sword hung by the bedside, are (in some districts) charms against the cramp; headache is removed by the halter that has hung a criminal, and also by a snuff made from moss that has grown on a human skull in a graveyard. A dead man's hand, and especially the hand of a man who had been cut down while hanging, dispels tumours. Warts may be removed by rubbing them with a bit of stolen beef; the chips of a gallows, worn in a little bag round the neck, will cure the ague; a stone with a hole in it, suspended at the bed's head, will prevent nightmare. Many verses are known, which, if repeated aloud, are credited with curing cramp, burns, and other bodily troubles. When you have the whooping-cough, apply for a remedy to the first person you meet with riding on a piebald horse—a ceremony that Doctor Lettson, the physician, was fated more than once to become acquainted with. Amulets, hung in a little bag around the neck, are very widely credited with the power of warding off disease; the list of such substances is an ample one, but need not be given here. The anodyne necklace, which was a profitable affair for one Doctor Turner in the early part of the present century, consisted of beads made of white bryony root; it was believed to assist in cutting the teeth of infants around whose neck it was hung.

One peculiar kind of amulet is the phylactery, a bit of parchment on which a few sacred words have been written; if worn on the person, it is a safeguard against disease and calamity. The Jews in the East used to carry such an amulet written with a Hebrew verse from the Bible; and some of the Mahomedans with an Arabic sentence from the Koran. A horseshoe is a perennial favourite, as a bringer of success. Doctor James picked up a horseshoe on Westminster Bridge, and put it in his pocket; that same evening he made a profitable commercial arrangement concerning his famous Fever Powders, which he ever afterwards attributed to the horseshoe. Strange provincial nostrums, for which no intelligible reason can be assigned, are too numerous even to name; as in the other cases here mentioned, the cures by their means, if cures they be, are no doubt entirely through the imagination.

## NO ALTERNATIVE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DENIS DONNE," &c.

CHAPTER XIII. "BUT IF OTHERS SHARE WITH ME, FAREWELL TO HER WHO'EER SHE BE."

"CLAUDE has had a business telegram calling him to town; he was sorry to start without seeing you, but he was obliged to go."

Mrs. Powers delivered herself of these words blandly—she, at least, was well satisfied with the turn affairs had taken—when Jack Ferrier came back to the Court after that heart-rending exposé which Harty had made of herself.

"Gone! why?"

He asked the question vaguely. A faint sense of relief at not having to face Claude immediately stole over him; but the relief was instantly submerged in an ocean of regret that Claude should have felt it necessary to get himself away. "No woman will ever come between us." How mockingly the memory of those words, which he had uttered in perfect faith, rang in his ears now!

For a woman had come between him and the best friend he could ever have in this world. A woman who had twined herself so closely round his heart, that though his respect for her was gone, though his belief in her was gone, though his desire to marry her was gone, he could not cut himself adrift from and forget her utterly. The memory of her dear wistful, changeable, pleading, mobile face would rise up before him as he recalled the words in which she

had made plain her perfidy. Would rise up maddeningly, making him long to draw it down on his breast, and bid it repose there and find rest. He almost felt again the firm nervous pressure of the little flexible hand that had surrendered itself so freely to the caresses of his lips. "How many other men had kissed that hand?" he wondered. "To how many other men had she seemed the soul of candour, purity, and integrity? How many other fools had fallen into the net that she feigned to be unconscious of spreading?" All these questions he asked himself, in his first wrath against her, for having come between Claude and himself, and still some deep conviction told him that the girl was to the full as much sinned against as sinning.

"But"—he couldn't help remembering this—"she had feigned terribly well; she had played a double game, she had embittered Claude's life, and she had put him (Jack Ferrier) in the position of a mean sneak; probably her love for him was a mere sham—a mere pastime!" His rage grew as he conjured up this possibility, and he vowed a vow of weight that she should not hang his scalp up in her wig-wam to show to the next passer-by (possibly a "friend" of his own) whom she might prefer to him.

All his recollections of her womanly charms and graces rose up and damaged her cause with him now. Her lissom, supple, rounded form, how he hated its graciousness as he reflected that another man—probably other men—had embraced it. The hazel eyes, down into whose depths he had gazed, in the vain belief that he was reading her soul, had probably given their apparently truthful glances just as gladly to others—to Claude certainly. The impulsive gestures, the light touch of the hands that were always fluttering about, the quick vivacious change of mood and manner. All these things which had won him to love and believe in her graceful untamed nature, rose up as evidences of her artfulness before him now, and made him shrink from her.

He really had indulged in a vision of a girl whom he could guard as the apple of his eye, in perfect confidence as to no portion of her delicate bloom having been brushed away by a rude previous hand, and now this vision was blurred and marred by the revelation that she herself had made to him. It stung him to his heart to feel that no time had elapsed between Claude's day and his own. They had



been running simultaneously for her favour, and she had made each one believe that he had it.

Like the majority of men who know a good deal about the world, and the women who tend to demoralise it, Jack Ferrier was very little inclined to be lenient to anything that even looked like laxity of principle in girls of his own grade. "Women who are fit to be wives and mothers should marry the fellow they love first, and have done with it," he had always held until he had met Harty Carlisle. It never occurred to him to provide for the contingency of "the men they loved first" declining to marry them. According to his idea a first meant a final failure, therefore he had stretched a point when he magnanimously accepted the position of being Harty's second lover.

But to be Claude's superseder and successful rival—to be the ultimate choice of a girl who had been balancing herself between them, was a depth of degradation to which he could not descend. He tried to turn away resolutely from the thought of her pleading eyes, and supple grace, and winning gestures; he tried to fling from him the alluring memory of the little hand he had kissed and clasped so passionately; he tried to deafen himself to the pathos she would infuse into her tones when he made known to her his intention of giving her up for honour and friendship. And he failed miserably in all his efforts, for he loved her with the desperate love that girls of the Harty Carlisle type do inspire.

Such a number of wretched little interruptions came between him and the fulfilment of his determination to have done with the woman who had deceived his friend. Claude's going away, though it removed from him the onus of offering, and hearing, an explanation that would have been infinitely distressing to them both, was awkward, inasmuch as immediate action was called for in his case, and Claude might have been able to say something which would partially have exonerated Harty. As it was, "I must go through it in the dark," Jack Ferrier told himself. "At any rate it shall be all square between Claude and me; but how to keep it square I don't see exactly."

"I have come to congratulate you, Harty," Agnes Greyling said, coming in with a hearty, girlish, enthusiastic rush the next day. "Dear Harty, several people thought it was the other one, but I'm so glad it's Mr. Ferrier."

"And I am very glad that it's Mr. Ferrier, too," Mrs. Greyling put in graciously, coming round to Harty, after having administered a congratulatory pressure, that hurt her horribly, to Mrs. Devenish's hand. "You puzzled us a good deal, young lady. Oh yes, you have been a little sly, you know; but all's well that ends well; and, for my own part, I think it better for girls to marry in their own sphere than to look very high——"

"And die of honours unto which they were not born, like Lady Burleigh," Harty interrupted. "As for marrying in my own sphere, we can't be sure that I'm going to do that yet. Mr. Ferrier may be a ticket-of-leave man for all we know. I have taken him on trust."

"My dear Harty, he is Mr. Powers's friend."

Harty laughed impatiently. "Do you think that Mr. Powers holds a talisman that saves him from being deceived by either man or woman?" she asked, bitterly. "Don't be frightened, Mrs. Greyling; I have not the slightest grounds for my supposition that Mr. Ferrier may be a ticket-of-leave man; but don't charge Claude with the responsibility of my marrying Jack if it all turns out badly."

"I recommend a very brief engagement," Mr. Devenish said from the sofa. "I know the old adage about marrying in haste; but it's better that the repentance should set in after marriage than before in this case."

"Much better," Harty cried out recklessly. She was sorely driven, poor girl, acutely anxious as to the result of her confession to Jack, and intensely mortified by the tone Mr. Devenish had taken about her new engagement.

"I think she's wise to marry any fellow who will have her," that gentleman had said, "damaged as she has been by Claude Powers hanging about her when he has had nothing better to do." Harty had a vivid recollection of these words having been used at her, and so now she grew reckless, and said:

"Much better; you have had an experience of the misery of the other alternative in my case already, haven't you? Let us be grateful that Jack Ferrier is blinder, less sensitive, less true to the memory of that poor unhappy boy than Claude Powers is."

"Let us be grateful that he doesn't know what a lunatic he has linked himself with," Mr. Devenish muttered, but only Harty caught the words, for Mrs.

Greyling was chirruping affably about "young ladies who were just engaged being just a little privileged to talk in enigmas;" and Mrs. Devenish was feigning to listen to her guest, the while she was in reality trying to look Harty into resignation to "Edward's way."

Having taken the leap, having screwed her moral courage up to that point that in anticipation had been so exquisitely painful to her, namely, the telling Claude Powers that she had left off loving him with that hot love she had professed so freely, Harty's spirits had rebounded, and risen in an almost unaccountable way. She would not believe that Jack Ferrier would dream of giving her up after a few hours' temperate reflection. She could not believe that he would ever really seriously condemn her for having preferred him to another man, even though that other man was his friend Claude Powers. She had such faith in her sway over his soul that no prophetic tremor thrilled her when hour after hour passed, and still he did not come. Half Dillsborough called at the house at the corner, to congratulate her, and find out, if possible, if it was to be a long or a short engagement, and whether or not it was to be a show wedding. And Harty even went through the tedious ordeal of these callers and their platitudes graciously and brightly. She knew herself to be anything but without reproach as regarded Claude, but she was absolutely without fear as regarded Jack Ferrier. She had formed an estimate of the latter's character which was wonderfully reassuring at this juncture. His strong physique, a certain bold audacity which distinguished him, a slight vein of recklessness which ran through his conversation and conduct at times, had led her into the belief that he would be far more lenient to any womanly swerving from the perfectly straight line than Claude would ever have been. She wished with all her power of wishing that she had been faithful to the latter, but since her faith had failed, Jack was not the type of man to resent the failure that he himself had caused. Unconsciously, too, she was strengthened in her satisfaction with her position with Jack, by the confident feeling she had that he could not kill his passionate love for her. So she received the congratulations, and listened to the surmises of her friends with charitable calm, and even allowed Agnes Greyling to advise her about her wedding-dress.

"I'll only have Mab and you for my

bridesmaids," she said at last. "I don't think he has any girl-people of his own."

"Mr. Powers will be his best man, I suppose," Agnes interrupted, blushing a little. She had not absolutely surrendered her heart to Claude, but she had it in her hand ready to surrender, should he ever ask for it. The prospect, therefore, of officiating together with Claude at so suggestive a ceremony as the wedding of Claude's most intimate friend, had its charms for her.

A scarlet wave of colour swept over Harty's face. It is one thing for a girl to free herself from an engagement, and quite another thing for her to contemplate the presence of the one with whom she has broken, at her wedding with another man.

"I hope he won't be," she stammered out. "I should like Jack's best man to be quite a stranger, one who wouldn't look either glad or sorry, but only properly bored, as all men ought to look at a wedding." Then she got herself out of the room, for her vivid imagination had conjured up a vision of how Claude would probably look if he saw her being given over to another man. She had given the pain, the poor little unstable coward! But the prospect of witnessing it was very agonising to her.

"Do you know," Agnes Greyling began slowly, speaking to Mabel, as soon as Harty had left them, "people thought—mamma did among others—that Harty cared for Mr. Powers?"

"I think she did, at one time," Mabel answered, lifting her softly suffused face eagerly towards Agnes; "but you mustn't think that Claude has been thrown over for Mr. Ferrier; even Harty would hate to think that anybody thought that about Claude!"

She spoke in a flush of enthusiasm, letting the words "even Harty" ring out with almost condemnatory emphasis, and breathing Claude's name in softly caressing tones.

"'Even Harty,'" Agnes cried promptly, in defence of the absent. "I should think so! Harty's the last girl to wish anybody to think that any man has ever cared for her. She'll speak of her love for any one freely enough, but as for talking of any one's love for her, she couldn't do it; but any one could see Claude Powers was fond of her; you must have seen it."

"He is very friendly with us both," Mabel said, gravely.

Now that it was definitely at an end

between Claude and Harty, Mabel was allowing her hero to assume his proper proportions in her heart. She had kept the feeling at bay for months, while she still believed him to be legitimately Harty's property. But now that Harty had wilfully and blindly preferred a lesser man, the feeling knocked her down, and trampled upon her good resolutions, and seemed about to eat up her sisterly love and generosity. Her love for him, she suffered herself to think, was of a higher order than Harty's had ever been. She would make any sacrifice, overstep any obstacle for him, if he only suffered his heart to be caught in the rebound. This being the case, she did not wish Harty's to be a long engagement, nor did she desire that it should get bruited abroad that Harty had thrown Claude over.

"He is very friendly with us both, Agnes. I assure you often when we have been riding together, I've feared Harty might think that I was monopolising him, because we always seemed to have so much to say to each other; for there is no doubt about it, at one time Harty was very fond of him."

Mabel had not the smallest objection to making open mention of Harty's liking for Claude, but she was beginning to feel conscious of a little pang of jealousy at the mere recollection of Claude's fondness for Harty.

"It must be delightful to be on such brotherly terms with him," Agnes said.

She, too, was sighing for her innings. It did seem a little hard that after all that had been said and done by her mother to make her think of Claude, that he should be a mere shuttlecock between these two sisters. Agnes Greyling was not at all of the husband-hunting and manœuvring order of girls; but she was a woman to be won, and it did occur to her that it would be very pleasant were Claude Powers to win her.

Very probably she would have thought the same thing even had her mother not been perpetually thrusting the bow and spear into her hand, and bidding her put the war-paint on. But, as it was, added to the slight love-disappointment which the girl was feeling, there was the sense of ignominious failure. She had been hawked and offered, and she knew it, and her sisters knew it, and her mother, who had hawked and offered her, knew it. She had rebelled against the system, and the rebellion had been in vain; and now at last she had succumbed to it, only to find that, as far

as Claude was concerned, both struggle and surrender had been fruitless. Clearly, now, if Harty had put herself out of the pale, Mabel was quite ready to have him relegated to her! Agnes did not exactly repine, but she was not quite ready to acknowledge the certain working of the law of compensation.

Meanwhile, Jack was striving to work out the wretched problem which his love for Harty and Harty's deception of him had put before him, and rendered it necessary he should solve. It really hurt him more to feel that she was unworthy, than it did to give her up. The thought that she had carried on the game with two men contemporaneously, like a skilful chess-player, stung him into a paroxysm of gladness (in which there was a good deal of pain) that he had not made this bewitchingly traitorous girl his wife before he discovered her treachery. "She seemed to think so little of it, too," he muttered to himself; and he thought that the bloom was off that peach with fell certainty.

It was a sufficiently disagreeable ordeal that which he had to pass through, to have expiated any number of minor sins. He felt horribly sure that Harty would try to tempt him from the barren path his own self-respect compelled him to take. Now that he had discovered one flaw in her, he went to the extreme of believing her to be a very imperfect being altogether. "A woman who will let two men love her at the same time, and show and express love for them both in return, will not limit herself to two for long," he told himself; and his brow burned as he reflected that, perhaps, already he had been but a bit of mere "padding" in Harty's very badly edited miscellany.

He got himself away from Mrs. Powers as early as he could in the day. Her deftly delivered praise and admiration of Harty grated against his knowledge of Harty as she was. As has been already told, Mrs. Powers really liked the girl in a sort of non-understanding way, and therefore, like many another human being, she conceived that she had fathomed some of the depths of Harty's nature. "You'll have a wife who will never care to descend to subterfuge for the sake of pleasing any one, and that's something in this world of humbug," the old lady said to the young man, who had found Harty out in what he rigorously denounced in his own mind as a basely acted lie.

His heart misgave him sadly as he rode away at last, late in the day, to "have done

with her." Poor little, sensitive, proud Harty, how she would smart for this folly of hers, for which he had no forgiveness, when it came to be known in the town that he had "ridden away," however dearly he had once loved her. About her sensitiveness and power of suffering he had no doubt. There was no manner of deception about that. If it had been any fault or folly but this which she had been guilty of, he would have passed it over and blotted it out. But that she should have been lavishing expressions of endearment and vows of affection on two men at the same time, shocked him away from her with a repellent force which he knew he would be unwise to combat.

"No, no; she'll have the triumph of knowing that she has spoilt my life, but she shall not have the further one of feeling that I'm ready to shy over all my ideas of what a woman ought to be, for her sake," he told himself. And fraught with this determination, he went into the presence of his affianced bride.

She was bending over a table looking at a newspaper, with her mother and sister, reading an account of some garrison-ball which had lately taken place in one of the many places at which they had been quartered in the old regimental days. Familiar names, familiar expressions, had conjured up a host of old associations, and a fiercely vivid vision of "what might have been." Harty almost always broke down under the spell of retrospection, and she was breaking down now. There were no tears in her eyes—she did not wish to greet her new lover with a red nose—but the lines swam before her, and she had a pain in her throat, and her face felt hot. Mabel, who had loved the gay part of the past to the full as well as Harty, was far better able to babble cheerfully about it in the present. She was delivering a running commentary on the account, when Jack appeared, and she barely paused in it to greet him.

"See, Harty, Withers was there—Captain H. P. Withers—how well he used to go with both of us, and those horrid Molyneux girls who persecuted Claude so at Southsea; what pork-pies they wore at him, because he had happened to say we looked well in ours. They got them smaller than ours, and their faces were five times as big; so they're about still!—odious garrison hacks."

"They're about still—as we should be if we had the chance," Harty said.

She had given her hand to, and a smile, and a long sweet look at Jack; and Jack had just touched the hand; and had disregarded the smile, and had turned from the look.

"I'm no Merlin, and I'll be shot if she shall do me with the Vivien trick," he said to himself; but the determination cost him more pain than he had ever felt in his life before.

She marked it all, she ached at it all, but by never so much as a tender inflection of her voice—by never so much as a quiver of her nervous, sympathetic mouth—by never so much as a pleading movement of the hands that could be so eloquent, so touchingly graceful, did she seek to win him from it. In one respect, at least, he was soon made to understand that he had wronged her far more bitterly than she had disappointed him. If lifting her finger would have brought the man who deemed her erring back to her feet, she would not have lifted it now.

She concentrated all her energies on the one endeavour to keep perfectly quiescent, perfectly composed, until she could turn to him when they were alone, and spare him all further trouble concerning her. She stood with her arms stretched down, and her fingers interlaced, her head bent, and her eyes fixed on the newspaper, in which she read nothing now save a portion of the story of her life. And he watched her, as one does watch a thing that is more than precious to one when it is fading away.

Watched her, taking in every detail of the grey, softly falling dress that clung so closely and easily to the swelling bust and slender waist. Seeing as he had never seen before the grace of the brown-haired head, and the winning power of the earnest hazel eyes. Longing as he had never longed before to prison the tiny resolute hands, and unseal the silent mouth with a kiss!

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